

Message Text

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SUBJ: IRAN-US COOPERATION ON NUCLEAR ENERGY

REF: A. TEHRAN 4634 B. TEHRAN 5594

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES USG HAS MADE A GOOD START IN ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH IRAN IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. THE MISSION TO TEHRAN OF AEC CHAIRMAN DIXIE LEE RAY IN MAY ESTABLISHED PERSONAL CONTACT WITH IRANIANS IMPORTANT IN THIS FIELD AND SERVED TO INFORM THEM IN A GENERAL WAY WHAT WE COULD DO TO ASSIST THEM IN DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY. AEC HAS ALSO BEEN HELPFUL SUBSEQUENTLY IN PROVIDING PARTICULAR INFORMATION DESIRED BY DR ETEMAND OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY ORGANIZATION OF IRAN.

2. WE ALSO NOTE THAT AEC SIGNED TWO URANIUM ENRICHMENT CONTRACTS WITH IRAN LATE IN JUNE AS A POLITICAL CONCESSION, DESPITE A GENERAL MORATORIUM ON FURTHER COMMITMENTS PENDING STUDY OF AVAILABLE CAPACITY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EIGHT NEW URANIUM ENRICHMENT CONTRACTS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO DR ETEMAD AND ARE GRATIFIED THAT WE ARE FORMALIZING OUR COMMITMENT TO IRAN.

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3. WE HOPE THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT ON A DRAFT AGREEMENT FOR COOPER-

ATION WITH IRAN TO COVER PURCHASE OF ENRICHMENT SERVICES AND PURCHASE OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A COMPLEX MATTER, BUT THIS AGREEMENT WAS REQUESTED THREE MONTHS AGO (REFTEL A).

4. OUR REAL CONCERN AT THIS TIME IS TO SEE THAT THE US CAPTURES A FAIR SHARE OF THE CONTRACTS TO BUILD NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS IN IRAN. DR ETEMAND HAS INTIMATED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THAT HE EXPECTS AMERICAN COMPANIES WILL WIN THE CONTRACTS TO CONSTRUCT POWER PLANTS FUELED BY AEC-ENRICHED URANIUM. HOWEVER, REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN COMPANIES HERE BELIEVE SUCH A COMFORTABLE EDGE FOR THE US IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT BOTH CANADIAN AND WEST GERMAN COMPANIES ARE MAKING VERY COMPETITIVE PROPOSALS, AND THESE AMERICAN COMPANIES WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF THE USG ENTERED INTO SOME SORT OF GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE GOI, WHICH SPECIFIED IRANIAN INTENT TO USE AMERICAN COMPANIES TO BUILD THE POWER PLANTS FUELED BY AEC-ENRICHED URANIUM. WE BELIEVE THIS IDEA TO STAKE OUT A LARGE PORTION OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN COMPETITIVE ENDEAVOR IS WORTH THE DEPARTMENT'S SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

5. ALSO, AS SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES BIDDING FOR A PIECE OF THE ACTION HERE, WE BELIEVE IT IS DESIRABLE THAT DR ETEMAD AND A FEW OF HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISERS SHOULD VISIT THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO LEARN HOW THE AEC OPERATES, TALK WITH AMERICAN CONSULTANTS AND FIRMS ON THEIR HOME GROUND, AND VISIT REPRESENTATIVE NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES. WHILE WE REALIZE THE INITIATIVE RESTS WITH DR ETEMAD FOLLOWING OUR INVITATION DELIVERED EARLY IN JULY (REFTEL B) IT WOULD NOW SEEM DESIRABLE TO FOLLOW IT UP WITH A MORE SPECIFIC INVITATION, TIED PERHAPS TO CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR ENERGY AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER LABORATORY ARRANGEMENT.

HELMS

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